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A high-powered gubernatorial advisory panel is about to roll the dice on a proposed remake of the Chicago area's transportation system. But key officials on both sides of the aisle, including Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, R-Yorkville, may not be in the mood to gamble.

The proposal comes from the committee's chairman, U.S. Rep. William O. Lipinski, D-Chicago, who says he has the votes to pass it in a meeting set for Wednesday, sending it to the Illinois General Assembly.

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra and Pace have spent too much time squabbling among themselves and too little time building a unified transit system, says Mr. Lipinski, a close ally of Gov. Rod Blagojevich. "A strong, empowered (Regional Transportation Authority) chairman is important to have the kind of transportation system we need."

The plan would sharply boost the power of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to set priorities, supervise and avoid duplication between the CTA and Metra. It also would merge suburban bus operator Pace into Metra, the suburban train operator, and combine land use and transportation planning into one new agency.

The most contentious part of the plan would effectively hand control of the new RTA to a chairman, appointed by the governor. The chairman would serve as swing vote on a board with seven Cook County Democrats and seven suburban Republicans. That means decision-making power over how much to raise public transit fares and where to operate and expand public transit could flip back and forth between Democrats and Republicans after each election, depending on who's governor.

That's giving pause to Mr. Daley, who now has total control over the CTA, and to GOP allies of Mr. Hastert, who corrals hundreds of millions of dollars a year in federal transportation funds for the metropolitan area.

"You're making the governor the heavyweight under this plan. Can you assume he'll always be your guy?" asked U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, also a member of the panel.

With Mr. Blagojevich in the Governor's Mansion, Democrats at least initially would control a majority of the proposed new RTA board, Mr. Kirk continued. "With the votes will go the money."